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S E C R E T ANKARA 000660

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/04/2019
TAGS: PREL MARR MASS PGOV TU
SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR THE VISIT TO TURKEY OF VADM
FERGUSON, MAY 10-14, 2009

Classified By: Pol-Mil Counselor A.F. Godfrey, reason 1.4 (b and d)

¶1. (C) Summary: You will arrive in Turkey a month after President Obama's visit. The President's April visit had a game-changing effect not only in public opinion of the U.S. here, but also on issues relating to Turkey's increased commitments to Afghanistan, its readiness to move in the direction of rapprochement with Armenia and even, to a certain degree, on Turkey's willingness to show flexibility in defense procurement issues. A critical NATO ally bordering the Balkans, the Black Sea, the Caucasus, Iran, Iraq, and Syria, Turkey is crucial to U.S. interests in this region. Turkey's agreement for the use of its territory as a logistical hub by the U.S. remains extremely valuable to operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. We are committed to sustaining our successful intelligence sh!|QQCQZ3QMQe Turkish Parliament authorized the government to launch cross-border operations against PKK camps in northern Iraq. Since December 2007, when a new intelligence sharing mechanism was established between the U.S. and Turkey, military operations against the PKK have been significantly more effective. Public opinion of the United States has been on a noticeable upswing. This has created political space for the GOT to move forward with political, economic, and social measures that could undercut support for the PKK over the long term. These include an economic development plan aimed at the southeast, institution of a Kurdish language television station on the state-run network, and plans for the institution of Kurdish language and literature at various universities. All represent forward-leaning steps that would have been impossible for any Turkish government to take just a few years ago.

¶3. (S/NF) Turkey appreciated the President's renewed commitment continued U.S. support against the Kurdish terrorist PKK. Our intelligence support to Turkish counter-PKK operations continues, and Turkey's ability to fuse this intelligence and operationalize it continues to improve dramatically. On 18-20 March, our Office of Defense Cooperation, supported by experts from EUCOM, carried out an Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Seminar to further hone these skills. The conference was well attended and achieved its goals. We continue to encourage the Turkish General Staff to accept our offer of a "Warfighter Conference" which should further improve Turkey's capabilities through improved C2 processes and target-area tactics. The Office of Defense Cooperation has initiated programs designed to give the TGS a systems capability to improve their timeliness and accuracy against the PKK.

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